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RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 5049
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 009445

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: GOC CONTINUES TO UNCOVER MORE PARAMILITARY
INFLUENCE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC COAST

REF: A. BOGOTA 8793

[1](#)B. BOGOTA 9310
[1](#)C. BOGOTA 9217

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The GOC investigation stemming from the seizure of ex-paramilitary leader Jorge 40's computer continues to paint a disturbing picture of illegal activities on the North Coast, including murder, political corruption, and fraud. The Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) arrested four deputies in Sucre Department and formally opened a murder investigation against Jorge 40. Congressional contacts told us ex-paramilitary influence on the North Coast was pervasive outside of major cities; the influx of demobilized paramilitaries into urban areas was also producing increased crime and violence. End summary.

Jorge 40's Computer Revelations Continue

[1](#)2. (C) El Tiempo newspaper reported on October 7 that the Fiscalia's investigation of Jorge 40's computer reveals major crimes in Atlantico Department and a town in Magdalena Department from 2003-05. The computer reportedly includes a list of 558 persons murdered by paramilitaries in Atlantico. It also includes a list of GOC institutions in Atlantico allegedly under ex-para control, details on ex-para embezzlement of 10 percent of several local public contracts, information on schemes used to inflate the number of demobilized, identities of narcotraffickers, and names of GOC, Atlantic, Cesar, Magdalena, and Sucre Department officials on their payroll.

[1](#)3. (C) The Fiscalia recently arrested four deputies in Sucre Department, linked Jorge 40 to the murder of Professor Alfredo Correa de Andreis in Barranquilla, and began the trial of Jorge 40's right-hand man Edgar Ignacio Fierro (AKA

"Don Antonio,"), the source of the seized computer, additional hard drives, and documents. The Fiscalía also provided evidence to the Supreme Court of Justice on three senators implicated in Jorge 40's files: Dieb Maloof, David Char and Javier Caceres. The Supreme Court is the institution responsible for reviewing criminal cases against members of Congress. Vice President Francisco Santos said on October 11 he favored revealing information from the computer to the public, and called for exemplary punishments for those guilty of crimes.

More Revelations?

14. (C) Semana Magazine journalist Marta Ruiz (strictly protect), the first to report the computer story, told us the Fiscalía's investigation was likely to extend from the Atlantico Department to Cesar, Bolivar, Guajira, Magdalena, and Sucre. She warned additional politicians could be associated with Jorge 40, including Magdalena Governor Trino Luna, Sucre Governor Jorge Anaya, and Cesar Governor Hernando Molina. She raised the possibility the computer files could also link Jorge 40 to members of the powerful Araujo family. Sergio Araujo is known to be close to Jorge 40, and is commonly referred to as Jorge 40's press spokesman. His brother is Cesar Senator Alvaro Araujo; his sister, Maria Consuelo Araujo, is Foreign Minister.

15. (C) Ruiz said Jorge 40's paramilitary bloc never truly demobilized and continues to assert influence in Atlantico and Magdalena Departments. The Fiscalía is investigating the "Jose Pablo Diaz Front," which has never been mentioned previously and was not included among demobilized units. She noted she was trying to collect more information on Jorge

40's wife, who won the Magdalena's Department lottery consecutively in recent months.

Media Coverage Unhelpful, Suspicious

16. (C) Fiscalía Technical Investigative Corp (CTI) Chief Mairlu Mendez told us on October 12 media coverage of the Jorge 40 case had been detrimental to efforts to go after his associates and deter his narcotrafficking network. At least three suspects had disappeared since media reports surfaced. She noted she had received several death threats and numerous offers of substantial amounts of money for the computer. She warned that the media had not reported all the names of prominent politicians that appear on the computer. Mendez said the CTI was looking to arrest close to sixty still active paramilitaries associated with Jorge 40.

Coastal Politicians

17. (C) Congressional contacts told us ex-paramilitary political influence on the North Coast was pervasive outside of major cities; the influx of demobilized paramilitaries into urban areas was also sparking increasing crime and violence (reftels). They expected additional senators and representatives to be implicated in the Jorge 40 case. Still, Representative Alonso Acosta and Senator Efraim Cepeda said the most valuable ex-para-controlled politicians "would never be named on any computer," and claimed some were listed because Jorge 40 wanted to control them, not because he already did. House Secretary General Angelino Lizcano told us most new North Coast politicians were tied in some way to the ex-paras. If they were not elected through paramilitary vote buying, said Lizcano, they at least needed to be sympathetic to para causes to have made it through the 2005 elections alive. When asked about the number of members of Congress that might be involved to one extent or another, Lizcano speculated up to thirty.

18. (C) Our congressional contacts said every politician on the North Atlantic Coast was scared of the ex-paras and knew government bureaucrats or friends who had been driven from office or murdered by them. Acosta added, the ex-paras "killed without even thinking about it." Conservative Party Senators Roberto Gerlein and Efraim Cepeda told us popular support for the ex-paras in the north was created by the decades-long threat from the FARC, but this support had now greatly diminished due to GOC success in establishing better security. The term paramilitary was no longer an accurate description of the group. "They had become pure criminals and killers," Gerlein said.

Cities Avoid Paras, but Public Health Suffers

19. (C) Former Senator and coastal political legend Jose Name claimed powerful coastal families, including his own, had used their influence to keep paramilitaries out of major cities. Still, Barranquilla Mayor Guillermo Hoenigsberg--facing charges of public corruption, but no charges of para ties--said ex-paramilitaries controlled almost all of the rural public health system on the coast and were expanding their activities to other sectors. Three separate North Coast senators confirmed ex-para attempts to control the health system. Senator Alvaro Ashton lamented that public corruption historically took ten percent of public health care funds, but said the ex-paras were taking virtually 100 percent in districts like Soledad, south of Barranquilla. Hence, public health services were collapsing across the region.

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